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No. 4.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers.

NEW YORK.

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AMONG THE ESQUIMAUX OR, THE LONG NIGHT IN THE FROZEN NORTH.



BY THE AUTHOR OF
"NICK CARTER"

WITH A TERRIFYING HOWL THE BEAR DROPPED KOTUK AND STAGGERED BACK.

NICK CARTER Detective

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No. 4. STREET & SMITH, Publishers. NEW YORK. 29 Rose St., N. Y. 5 Cents

TRIM AMONG THE ESQUIMAUX; OR, A Long Night in the Frozen North.

By the Author of "NICK CARTER."

CHAPTER I.

OUTWITTED BY A WOMAN.

Tick-tick-tick—tick.

Silence.

Tick-tick—tick.

A whispered consultation.

Tick-tick-tick—tick.

"It's all right."

"May be a trick."

"No. Nobody knows the signal who isn't all right."

"Go to the door and see."

Tick—

The rapping began again, this time louder than before, as if the party outside were getting impatient,

Before the signal had been repeated the door upon which the rapping occurred was opened a crack and a gruff voice said:

"What's wanted?"

"I want to come in, of course," was the frank reply. "What in the world has come over you fellers that you don't

open up the first time you hear the signal?"

"Hello, 'Trim!'" responded the voice behind the door, speaking now more freely. "Slip in quietly and don't talk so loud."

"What's happened to scare you?" asked Trim as he dodged through the half-open door into a perfectly dark room.

"We got the tip," said a voice in the darkness, "thet thare was thought of raidin' the joint, an' we kind of half suspected that somebody hed given away the signal."

"Thare's not many thet knows the signal, is thare?"

"No. Turn up the lights, Jim."

"I shouldn't hey thought thet you could suspect anybody of being a traitor."

"Oh, we don't. But, you know, thare's never any tellin'. You see, somebody might hev been listenin' for the

signal an' hev learned it without our knowin' it.

"The fact is, Trim, thet since you hev been in Sitka a good many of us hev learned that it is possible for one man to know a thunderin' lot about another, an' to get on to his tricks in a way thet is surprisin'."

Trim laughed lightly.

"If I do say it," he responded, "I don't think thare's anybody in Alaska just like me at this time, an' you fellers hev certainly nothin' to fear from me."

"Oh, no, we know you're square."

At this moment, a member of the party who had been attending to the lamps struck a match and the room was lighted.

It was one of three or four small rooms at the back of a saloon which was a favorite resort for the toughest characters in the Alaskan capital.

It was now long after the hour at which the sale of liquors was forbidden, and recent events in Sitka had made the officers of the law much more strict than usual.

Trim's own experience in uncovering crime there had led the authorities to take more than usual precautions to prevent the assembling of toughs, and therefore in this resort the greatest care was taken not to let the police suspect that any business was done after hours.

Trim himself was known to be so square that nobody in Sitka, high or low, feared that he would play them any trick. In fact, the roughest characters there were rather inclined to be unusually friendly with him, as if they hoped by that means to escape trouble at his hands if they should be charged with any kind of crime.

So, in spite of his recent detective work, he was still able to come and go as he pleased among the very men whose actions might give rise to further work on his part.

When the half dozen who had gathered there on this night heard the peculiar series of raps that announced the arrival of a visitor, they turned out the lights and kept still.

The second series of raps, differing from the first in the manner indicated above, convinced them that the person outside was familiar with their ways.

Now that they knew the visitor to be young Trim Carter, their fears of discovery vanished, but they continued to converse in low tones, and only had just enough light in the room to enable them to reach for their glasses and move about without knocking things over.

"What'll you hev, Trim?" asked the proprietor of the place.

Trim called for beer and a cigar and sat down at a small table as if he intended to make a night of it.

"Are you goin' to do any more detective work yere?" asked one of the men.

Trim shrugged his shoulders.

"I didn't come to Alaska," he responded, "with any idee of doin' detective work, an' when I took up the gold mine case* I thought thet would be my last experiment."

"Things just happened to come along to keep me hustling in thet line, but I've not yet thought of myself es a regular detective."

"Thet ain't quite answerin' the question."

"Ain't it?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Why, you was asked ef you was goin' to do any more detective work yere."

"Well, I was tryin' to explain thet I can't answer thet question, for I don't know what will happen."

"Guess you're ready for whatever turns up."

* See the story of this name, No. 1 NEW NICK CARTER LIBRARY.

"Bet your life, Petey. Thet's what I always tried to be since I started out in life."

"Say, Trim, you started out pretty young, didn't you?"

"Reckon I did. Reckon I began to live as soon es I drewed my first breath."

The men laughed quietly at this, and after a pause Trim remarked:

"Right straight, now, I shouldn't wonder ef this would be my last visit yere."

"Why?"

"I'm thinkin' of leavin' Sitka."

"You don't say?"

"I do. I've stayed yere longer now than I intended to."

"Where be you goin'?"

"Oh, I've not made up my mind exactly yet, but to some other part of the world, I suppose."

"We'll be sorry to hev you go, Trim."

"Thanks."

The doors into two adjoining rooms were wide open. There was no lamp in either of them, but the light from the main room gave a dim view of their interiors.

Unnoticed by the men in the dive, Trim had glanced into these rooms the moment one of the number struck a match. Apparently they were empty.

As his eyes became accustomed to the light, however, he saw that in one of the rooms there was a man seated before a table with his back to the company and his head resting on his outstretched arms.

It was so dark that Trim could not even judge of the size of this man or tell what kind of clothes he wore, much less recognize him.

The young fellow sat down in such a way that he could command a view of that room, such as it was.

During the conversation, which Trim, in spite of the cautions of the proprietor, conducted in a rather loud voice, he kept his eyes on this man, but up to this time had failed to notice any movement.

It looked as though the fellow was in a drunken slumber. There was nothing unusual in that. In fact, it was the most commonplace thing to see in one of the back rooms one or more men who had drunk too much, and who had been put in there to sleep off the effects of liquor.

"That fellow," Trim thought, "is probably in the middle of a jag. At the same time, I wish something would happen to give me a sight of his face."

"He is so hunched up that I can't make out whether he is bigger or smaller than Ole Hansen."

In a previous investigation, the details of which have been set forth in "Trim and the Swedish Swindler," No. 3 of NICK CARTER LIBRARY, Trim caught a man named Ole Hansen in a series of robberies.

Ole was simply a tool of a shrewd impostor, who had been thoroughly exposed by Trim and placed where, for some years at least, he could be of no damage to anybody.

Ole had managed to get away, and Trim, exasperated by this fact, had made up his mind that he would run the fellow down and land him in jail with his master before leaving Alaska.

The last seen of Ole, he was making his way through the forest to the south of Sitka.

As long as he could find food and shelter he could defy capture in the wilderness of the island, but winter was now at hand, and there was no probability that a fugitive could survive long in the extreme cold of the woods and mountains.

Trim was of the opinion that Ole would be forced to return to Sitka. There was no other place to which he could go for shelter, and it was not at all probable that he had any means of escape by sea without going to Sitka for a boat.

For two or three days, therefore, Trim had been on the watch for any sign of Ole, but as yet had seen and heard noth-

ing to indicate that the fellow was in the vicinity.

His late visit to this dive was but a part of his programme of keeping his eyes open for the fugitive.

"When you thinkin' of goin', Trim?" one of the men asked.

"I've not decided yet. In a day or two, perhaps."

"Thare ain't no boat leavin' Sitka at this time of year," suggested another.

"No, thare ain't," Trim admitted. "But likely I don't need to depend on thet."

"I suppose likely," said another, "thet you're own yacht will be callin' fer you."

"Well, now, thet wouldn't be the most surprisin' thing in the world," Trim answered. "But anyhow this is likely to be my last call yere, so ef you gentlemen don't object I'll set 'em up."

Of course the "gentlemen" did not object, and the proprietor hastened to set bottles and glasses before them.

While this was in progress a young woman came into the adjoining room through a door that opened from some other part of the building.

She glanced carelessly toward the party of whom Trim was a member, and sat down beside the man whose head was sunk upon his arms.

She laid her hand upon his shoulder, shook him lightly, and whispered something to him. Trim could not hear what she said, but he observed her intently.

He had no reason to suspect that she or the man in the other room was in any way connected with the case that interested him, but he was on the lookout for every chance that might throw light upon it.

He would have been intensely interested if he could have overheard the remark that the apparently sleeping man made to the woman after she shook him. It consisted of two words, only:

"T'at's him!"

Trim noticed that the young woman started slightly and that she again looked at him and his companions. None of the latter paid any attention to her, but after the drinks had been served the proprietor looked toward her and asked if she wanted anything. She shook her head.

"Plumb paralyzed, ain't he?" asked the proprietor with a grin.

She nodded and turned her face away.

Trim was greatly annoyed.

"I wonder," he said to himself, "if I'm making a fool of myself by giving that man and woman any thought? I can't help it if I am."

"There's one thing certain: as long as I sit here he isn't going to wake up."

"If he's the fellow I want, which is not unlikely, he's going to pretend to sleep until after I have gone, so I shall gain nothing by sitting here. I must give him a chance to stir."

Accordingly after the drinks had been taken Trim declined the treat that the proprietor and the others would have set up, made an excuse to go and left the place after shaking hands all around.

His queer friends wished him good luck, and probably some of them would have insisted upon going out with him if it had not been for fear that so many leaving the place at the same time would attract the attention of some policeman and so cause the joint to be raided.

Trim went out and walked rapidly away.

He took no pains to deaden his footsteps, but, on the contrary, made as much noise walking as he could.

When he had gone a few paces he turned about and retraced his steps, proceeding this time as noiselessly as possible.

He concealed himself in a dark corner near the private door to the joint, prepared for another experience of long waiting.

"Ole kept me freezing through the last half of one night," he said to himself, "and it didn't kill me, although he got away afterward.

"If he's the fellow that's in there now I'll willingly wait the rest of this night for the chance of seeing him when he comes out."

More than half an hour passed before anything happened to vary the monotony. Then a man approached the private door from without, gave the correct signals and was admitted.

Shortly after two others came away from the place. Then, at intervals of twenty minutes or half an hour, other men left the joint, until by count all who had been in or gone in since Trim's arrival had left the place except two—the proprietor, who would not probably come out that night at all, and the stranger in the adjoining room.

"This seems to prove," Trim reflected, "that the stranger really had a jag on and that he is too far gone to walk. Of course the proprietor won't throw him out, for that would be a give away upon the business done after hours.

"He'll let him sleep it off there and I won't see anything of him until long after daylight.

"It does seem as if he wouldn't have waited all this time to come out if he was simply anxious for a chance to get away when the coast was clear.

"At the same time, I don't like to risk leaving this place as long as he is inside, and I'm not going to.

"I'll stick it out here until business opens up in the morning, even if I freeze in my boots."

In this Trim was taking just the course that his father or Nick Carter would have taken under similar circumstances.

He showed himself the true detective by his patience and determination not to let a single chance escape him.

He had, therefore, the comfort of feel-

ing that he was doing the right thing, but if he could have seen what was going on in the dive after the last customer had departed, probably he would not have felt so good about it.

The door closed upon the last one, and the proprietor stood for a moment in the middle of the main room looking doubtfully at the sleeping figure in the back room and the woman who still sat beside him.

Presently the proprietor said, gruffly:

"I can't keep open yere all night unless thare's somethin' in it."

The young woman raised her head and asked:

"Have they all gone?"

"Yes," was the reply, "an' thare hain't likely to be any more comin' in to-night."

"Are you sure they are all gone?"

"Of course I am, an' I'd chuck your feller out ef it wasn't thet he would fall asleep in front of the door an' so give the thing away."

"He won't fall asleep," she responded, quickly. "He's ready to go now."

"You can't take care of him," said the proprietor, contemptuously. "A great big hulk of a feller like that will fall all over the street in spite of anything that you can do."

"He isn't drunk."

"Not drunk? Then what——"

"Listen," she said, rising. "You don't want to keep the place open unless there's something in it. I understand what that means.

"We're not spending any money for drinks, and shouldn't do so if we remained here. We don't want to remain. On the other hand, we want to get away at once; but we don't want to go out by that private door."

"It's the only way——"

"Hear me!" she interrupted, and she took a purse from her bosom, which she

opened and displayed a number of gold coins.

"You shall not lose anything. Let us out by some other way."

The proprietor looked hard at her for a moment and then said, sternly:

"Jennie, thare's somethin' crooked yere."

She did not answer.

"Thare's somethin' crooked yere," he repeated, "or you wouldn't be afraid to go out the way the others went."

"Now, it's the only way that you can go out."

"I let you come in this evenin' to my family rooms upstairs because you begged so hard an' said thare wouldn't be no trouble."

"Thet's all right. I'm not begrudin' you thef, but now you've got to take your own chances, an' I won't hev you takin' any thet's likely to bring trouble to me."

"You jest can't go out the front way, an' thet's the only other way besides the back way—see?"

"Dan," she said, earnestly, "you take chances of trouble every time you sell liquor in this place after hours, don't you?"

"I reckon I do."

"You might be fined, imprisoned, and driven out of business simply for the selling of one twenty-five cent drink, mightn't you?"

"I reckon thet's so."

"In other words," she continued, "you take great risks for a quarter of a dollar."

"Well," he answered, "I take pains to make those risks as small es possible, so thet nobody can get in only those who are friendly."

"And yet you let a detective in here to-night."

"Oh, I see! It's him you're afraid of."

"Yes, it is," she said, defiantly. "And what I'm getting at is this: When you're willing to take risks for a few cents you ought to be willing to take other risks for this," and she laid two gold coins on the table.

The proprietor looked hard at them. They represented a good deal more money than he would take in in the course of a good evening's business.

"Thet's right square of ye, Jennie," he said after a minute. "An' I give you my word for one thing, thet whatever happens I won't put your feller in Trim's way."

"Who is he?"

"Don't ask," she answered, "and I shan't have to tell you any lies."

The proprietor grunted and thought a moment, then he said:

"The front door is simply impossible, Jennie. A man-an' a woman goin' sneakin' out of thare at this hour of the night would be the strongest kind of a give away."

"I couldn't account fer it an' it would be dangerous fer your feller."

"There is another way," she answered.

"What other way?"

"When I was in your sitting room upstairs I noticed that the ell of the building next to this is only about seven feet below the window of that room. We can get out that way."

"You'd get shot fer burglars!"

"Not we."

"You'd be sure to wake people up!"

"Try it."

She put another coin upon the table and then turned to her companion and said:

"Come, we mustn't stay here longer."

The man arose promptly. He was a very tall fellow, and his long, heavy coat made him look even larger than he was. The collar was turned up about his face and his hat pulled down so that only his eyes were visible.

"It's risky," said the proprietor, with an admiring glance at the man's tall figure, "but ef you're really steady—ef you ain't got no jag, you might manage it."

The man made a gesture to show that he had drunk nothing and turned toward the door through which the woman had entered the room. She stepped ahead of him, opened the door, and all three passed through.

They were then in a dark hall through which thy felt their way to the stairs. The woman lead the way.

At the top of the flight she opened the door of a room and stepped across it to a window, which she raised.

"Don't wait," she whispered. Her companion let himself out of the window,

while the proprietor whispered excitedly: "Be careful not to come down hard on the roof of thet ell."

Neither man nor woman made any reply to this. With no more than a faint rustling noise the man let himself down, and presently his upraised hands appeared above the window sill, showing that he stood on the roof of the adjoining ell seven feet below.

"Good-by," whispered Jennie as she began to make her own way from the window. Her companion received her in his arms, carried her noiselessly across the ell, where he set her upon her feet.

Then he let himself down to the ground as he had gone from the window, and again she let herself down into his arms.

The proprietor of the dive stood at the open window until he heard the faint sounds of their feet crunching upon the snow as they hurried away.

"Well," he said to himself as he lowered the window again, "thet was takin' long chances, but ef young Trim really hed his eye on thet feller they hed good reason to take them chances, an' I reckon thet between Jennie an' the man, Trim will hev a harder nut to crack than he hes tackled yet."

"It looks to me es ef the chances air thet in this case, whatever it is, Trim will get left."

CHAPTER II.

CHECKMATED.

Shortly before sunrise, which, of course, came at a late hour at that season, Trim noticed signs within the dive to show that it was being made ready for the day's business.

He stepped quickly around to the front door and tried the handle. The door was locked, but the key was promptly turned by a man within.

"Hello, Trim!" this man said when he opened the door and saw the visitor. "Ain't you up early?"

"Yes," said Trim. "I wanted to get here before you opened up, to see if I could find a letter."

"A letter?"

"Yes. I was in here late last night, and it's possible I might hev left it here."

"I've not seen anything yet, but I've

not more than begun to clear up. You know where you was settin', don't you?"

"Oh, yes; in the largest of the three rooms at the back."

"Very well. Go in there an' poke around. Light a lamp ef you want to."

Trim went in and for two or three minutes pretended to hunt for a letter. His first glance within was sufficient, however. He saw that the man for whose coming he had waited all during the dreary hours was not there.

"I'm done—done completely," he said, "and the worst is that I don't know whether the fellow that has escaped me is the fellow I want or not."

He took an envelope from his pocket and returned with it to the barroom.

"Found it, didn't you?" said the barkeeper.

"Yes, I thought I should."

"Have an eye opener?"

"Don't know but I will."

Trim leaned carelessly against the bar and remarked:

"Dan don't hev many lodgers, does he?"

"Many?" returned the barkeeper in surprise. "He don't hev none."

"None at all?"

"No, of course. What made you think he did?"

"Why, I don't know," Trim answered, doubtfully. "I kind of got the idee thet he put people up yere over night sometimes."

"Well," responded the barkeeper with a laugh, "I don't say thet he don't once in a while, when some miner gets so all-fired jagged thet he can't move."

"Thet was what I was thinkin' of," said Trim.

"But in thet case," the bartender continued, "the lodger spends the night in one of those back rooms."

"Don't he ever go to any of the rooms upstairs?"

"Nothin' like thet hes ever happened since I worked yere."

"Not last night, for instance?"

"I should say not. Dan's family and myself are the only ones who slept in this building."

"Funny I should be mistaken about it," Trim remarked, carelessly; and a moment later he left the place.

He crossed the street and looked at the row of buildings in which the saloon was situated. He knew that it was altogether unlikely that the proprietor should have allowed his customers to go out by the front door.

"It is not altogether certain," he reflected, "that they were not permitted to spend the night in one of Dan's rooms; at the same time the chances are altogether against that.

"Let's see what I can find."

He made the entire circuit of the block in which the buildings were situated, and also explored the two or three alleys that ran between them.

He presently found himself at the back of the buildings and looking across the low ell to a window that he knew must open upon one of Dan's rooms.

"It could have been done," he said to himself. "A short man like me couldn't have dropped from Dan's window to that roof without making some noise about it, and a girl would have had more trouble still.

"But Ole Hansen is a perfect giant, and if he was the fellow it would have been easy enough for him to get down there without noise and lift the girl down after him.

"I guess that's what happened, and I have to begin again."

He went thoughtfully away from the place and returned to his own hotel, where he breakfasted. Shortly after this he was told that somebody wished to see him in the ladies' parlor. He went there and saw that a young woman was waiting for him, who, although she was dressed very differently from the one he had seen the night before and although her face was veiled, he at once decided was the one who had sat by the sleeping stranger.

"Is this Mr. Carter?" she asked.

"That's my name," Trim answered.

"I have some information for you," she said, "that I am afraid, almost afraid, to give."

"I hope you're not afraid of me, miss."

"No. I hear so much that is good about you that I shouldn't fear you, but I thought that you might feel that I was interfering."

"Nothing that you would say would

give me anything but pleasure," Trim gallantly responded.

He motioned to a chair, but she shook her head.

"It is only a word," she said, "and it may not interest you, but from what I have heard I think it will."

Trim bowed, to signify that he was listening.

"You have recently exposed a swindler," she continued in a low voice, "who is generally known as Captain De Bilk-you."

"I have had that pleasure."

"The captain had a servant who was concerned with him in his crimes."

"Yes."

"You didn't succeed in capturing the servant."

"I regret to say that I did not."

The woman hesitated a moment and then said:

"I understand that you are ambitious to capture the servant."

Trim looked hard at the veiled face for a moment before he answered:

"I am not a government detective, and I am not certain that I can admit that my ambition——"

"But I am sure you want to find him," the woman interrupted.

"Very well, what then?"

"I can tell you where he is."

"I shall certainly not decline to accept your information, but I hope you are perfectly certain that you are correct."

"Oh, I am," she answered, hastily.

"Indeed, I know absolutely what I am talking about."

"Well, then?"

"You'll find him at one o'clock this afternoon in an abandoned Esquimaux hut near the edge of the forest two miles south of Sitka. You know the main road that leads in that direction?"

"Yes," Trim responded. "I have been over that road."

"Perhaps you have noticed the hut that I speak of."

"I have."

"He's to be there at one o'clock. I presume I need say no more."

"A hint to such a clever detective as you are is enough."

She started as if she would leave the room.

"Excuse me," Trim said. "The hint is enough, but if you wish to help me in the capture of this criminal you may be able to give me a little further information."

"No. It is really all I know," she answered.

"But how should you suppose," Trim asked, "that I cared anything about this man Hansen?"

"Why," she answered, "the matter has been the subject of talk in certain circles, but really I——" She hesitated and then answered:

"You can understand that a lady would not like to be known as taking part in a detective's investigations."

"Of course," Trim responded.

"She's trying to make me think," Trim said to himself, "that she is one of the society dames here."

"I can understand that," he added aloud, "but I do feel that it might help if you would let me know how you obtained your information as to Hansen's movements."

She bowed her head a moment and said:

"I think I can safely say this much: That during his stay here Ole—that is, Hansen—became very much interested in a maid servant. I would rather not say it was my servant. I will leave you to guess that. His return here was to see her, and so I learned from her—you understand."

"Ah! yes. Then he has an appointment to meet her at this hut that you speak of?"

"Exactly; and he'll be sure to be there."

"Very well, then; I'll be there also."

The visitor bowed and again started to leave the room.

"I'm exceedingly obliged to you," Trim said, wishing to find some excuse to prolong the conversation.

"Don't mention it," she answered, "and please, if you guess who I am, don't let anybody know that I called upon you on this business."

"I will remember," he said.

She left the room and started down stairs.

Trim was excited. What he thought

about the matter may best be judged by what he did.

He ran to a window that looked out upon the main street, concealed himself in the curtains, and stood there until he saw the woman leave the hotel.

He noticed the direction which she took and then hurried down the stairs after her.

"I've got no business to do this work," he said to himself, angrily, "without a complete set of disguises. If I ever undertake another case I'll look out for that. As it is, I haven't got so much as a false mustache to put on."

A little way below the hotel Trim saw a closed carriage waiting by the curb. He hurried down to it.

"I want you," he said to the driver.

"I'm engaged," was the response.

"It don't make any difference. I've got to have you."

"But my customer——"

"And your customer can find somebody else. Here—do you see that?"

Trim held up a hundred-dollar bill. The driver's eyes opened wide.

"It is yours," said Trim, "if your carriage is mine for an hour."

"Good Lord!" was the response.

"You can have it for a week on those terms! Where to?"

The driver, who saw that Trim was in a great hurry, jumped to his seat.

Trim looked up the street. The woman who had called upon him was in sight, walking rapidly.

"Drive in the same direction that you are pointing now until I tell you to stop."

He got into the carriage, which started off at once. The woman was overtaken just as she turned into a street that led toward the northern part of the town.

It was little more than a road, having few houses upon it, and almost none beyond a little distance from the main thoroughfare.

Trim signaled to his driver to stop and got out. The woman was still walking rapidly, as if she had a long distance to go before coming to her stopping place.

"Get inside," said Trim to the driver. His tone and manner were so commanding that the driver obeyed without hesitation.

Trim followed him.

"Take off your coat and cap," he said.

The driver complied wonderingly, while Trim did the same.

The young fellow had an expensive overcoat and derby hat. The driver's coat was an immense article of brown fur and his cap was of bearskin.

"I don't believe you can get inside my coat," said Trim, "but you can throw it over your shoulders and prevent yourself from taking cold. I'm going to do the driving for a while."

While saying this he was throwing on the driver's coat, which, of course, was very much too large for him. This did not worry him at all, for he knew that while sitting upon the driver's seat the appearance of the misfit would not be noticeable.

He drew the bearskin cap down over his forehead and climbed up to the box, leaving the real driver inside. Then, confident that he was disguised enough for ordinary purposes, he whipped up and turned the carriage into the road which the woman had taken.

She was still in sight, and Trim allowed the horse to walk for fear of attracting her attention by driving rapidly. For at least a mile he slowly followed her.

At last, when they were beyond all houses, he saw her turn from the road into a field and begin to cross it. She looked back as she did so, and when she saw the carriages he hastened her steps, at the same time taking out a handkerchief and waving it.

"That's a signal," Trim said to himself, "and it means that she suspects what this carriage is here for."

He brought the lash hard down upon the horse's back and called to him to get up. In half a minute he had come to the point where the woman had entered the field. She was on the dead run now, and Trim began to understand her movements.

This field ended a short distance away at a cliff forty or fifty feet in height that sunk sheer down into the sea. It was so situated that a boat lying below it could not by any possibility be seen from any part of Sitka.

"This means," thought Trim, "that

Ole was the man in the dive last night and that he is planning to get away. The only possible way to escape is by water.

"He wouldn't have dared to go out of the harbor openly, so he's had his boat in hiding up here; and this woman, in order to give him a chance to get away, tried to fool me into going miles away in the opposite direction.

"Now she's probably giving him the signal that the game didn't work."

As the carriage came up to the point where the woman had entered the field Trim shouted, "Whoa," gave the reins a violent jerk, then dropped them and leaped to the ground.

He started on a dead run after the woman, leaving the driver to guess when he would come back.

He had gone but a few paces, when he found that the driver's long and heavy coat was an obstacle to his progress. It was not only heavy, but he tripped upon it constantly; accordingly he took it off and threw it upon the ground.

The woman had a pretty good start of him, but as Trim was a very fleet runner he gained on her rapidly after disposing of the coat.

She reached the edge of the cliff ahead of him.

As the land rose slightly to the edge Trim could not see the ocean, but he could hear the low booming of surf against the rocks below.

Arriving at the cliff edge, the woman shook her handkerchief two or three times violently, then faced about and cried:

"Halt! Advance another step at your peril!"

Trim saw that she held a revolver in her hand.

He reached instantly for his weapon without stopping in his run. The woman raised the weapon before Trim had more than touched the butt of his revolver and fired.

She was either no marksman or the excitement caused her hand to shake, for the ball plowed a furrow in the snow several feet at one side of Trim.

"Two can play that game, my lady," shouted Trim, with his weapon in the air.

"Drop that revolver, or I fire, and I shan't miss!"

She gave him just one glance of terror, then turned about, facing the sea, and threw the revolver far from her.

The next instant Trim had his hands upon her, and standing there at the edge of the cliff, he was just in time to see the revolver fall into the hands of Ole Hansen, who stood in the stern of a sloop-rigged boat almost directly under him.

"Good-by!" Ole shouted, triumphantly, as he seized the tiller.

He gave the two Esquimaux who were evidently the crew of the boat some instructions, in obedience to which they cut the anchor rope, pushed the mainsail so that it should the more quickly catch the wind, and almost instantly the sloop glided away.

"No come back pretty soon," Ole shouted, turning once more to the cliff. "W'en you catch me, tell me! Good-by, Mr. Trim!"

"Yes," said the woman at Trim's side, defiantly, "when you catch him you might tell me, too!"

CHAPTER III.

AT SEA IN A KAYAK.

As she said this she raised her veil, and Trim saw that he was not mistaken in identifying her as the woman who had been in Dan's dive the night before.

The young fellow was filled with anger against her because she had outwitted him, and yet he could not repress a feeling of admiration at the same time for the cleverness and boldness with which she had worked.

"You made just one mistake, miss," he exclaimed, "when you thought you could throw me off the track with a ghost story about a meeting in a hut."

"I don't care," she retorted. "Ole has got away, anyhow."

"He had to leave you behind," remarked Trim.

She shrugged her shoulders and looked down at the sea, where Ole's sloop was sailing away to the northward.

"Yes, that's true," she admitted, a little sadly. "An hour or two more, and we might have gone together; but that's

nothing now that he has escaped your clutches."

"It must make him feel nice," exclaimed Trim, in exasperation, "to know that he has escaped and left you here."

The woman turned upon him with a scornful laugh.

"What nonsense are you thinking of?" she cried. "You have nothing against me. You can't touch me."

"I'm not so sure about that," responded Trim. "In most countries it is a criminal offense to fire a revolver at a man."

Her face grew slightly pale and she bit her lip.

"I think I should get clear on a plea of self-defense," she said in a low voice.

"Yes, I think you would," Trim thought.

He had been so angry and so exasperated at the escape of Ole that he had stood at the edge of the cliff looking vainly after the retreating boat. Now his senses returned with a characteristic determination not to be balked in this way.

"It looks as if I was playing a losing hand, but the game is not finished yet," he said to himself, and without a word to the woman he started on a run back toward the carriage.

"She's probably right," he reflected, "in saying that I couldn't hold her on any charge; and although it's possible that she may have been an accomplice of Ole and Captain De Bilkyou in their swindling operations, she is not an important member of the conspiracy and can be let alone until I can manage to catch Ole."

"That is still the main thing, and we'll see if there's not a boat in Sitka that can be hired or bought to chase him with."

Near the edge of the field he met the driver, who had left the carriage to take up his overcoat.

"I thought when you bolted," the driver said, "that I was going to lose my hundred dollars and my clothing, too."

"Your hundred is all right, but the hour is not up yet," Trim answered. "Put on your coat and drive to the docks at a two-thirty gait; you shall have your hundred when you get there."

The driver ran to his seat and whipped up before Trim was half in the carriage.

No horse was ever driven so fast in Sitka before.

Arrived at the docks, Trim handed over the hundred-dollar bill, which the driver took with the remark:

"Obleeged to ye, boss. Now if I'm in good luck I can get back to that store in time to pick up my other customer."

It is a curious fact, which Trim learned long afterward, that the driver succeeded in doing just that, and so made a clean profit out of the young detective's transaction.

On the way to the docks Trim thought over the boats that he knew about in Sitka, and made up his mind that as there was no steam craft that could be obtained he would have to put up with any sailboat that might be offered. Most boats of this kind had been laid up for the winter.

The business of letting boats to pleasure parties had been given up for the season long before.

There were no schooners or sloops in active service, therefore, except a few fishermen. It so happened that all of these were absent at the time, having taken advantage of a fair day to go a long way off shore.

Trim took in this situation with a sweeping glance at the harbor.

Two or three old tubs that could hardly have been made to sail more than four miles an hour in the best of weather were lying at anchor a little way from the landing place, but Trim thought he would rather try to walk across the sea than to make a race in any of them.

His heart felt very heavy as he saw that Ole had possession of just about the only boat that could have been obtained in Sitka that morning.

"The woman got it for him," he said to himself, "and had the boat sent around to the other side of that cliff to wait for him."

"Confound the luck! or rather my stupidity in not foreseeing some such thing as this and engage a boat to await my orders."

The young fellow felt dreadfully blue about it. It was just as bad as if he were a schoolboy who had been promised an excursion and who had been left behind at the last moment.

The thought of possible discomforts in this cold sea in winter time did not occur to him. He was anxious simply to capture the flying criminal; and that he could not make a race for it was exasperating beyond expression.

"Mornin', Mr. Trim," said a thick voice behind him. Trim turned and saw a stocky, good-humored Esquimau approaching, with whom he had been on fishing excursions earlier in his stay at Sitka.

"Hello, Kotuk!" he responded, with some appearance of interest. "Where you bound?"

The Esquimau grinned, put one fat finger to his eye, and answered:

"Kotuk know. Kotuk say nothing. Saw wood."

"You'll get caught some of these days," remarked Trim, severely, who understood from the Esquimau's words that he was bound upon a smuggling or a seal-poaching expedition.

"No, no," the Esquimau responded, gravely. "Kotuk sharp; too sharp for everybody 'cept Mr. Trim, and Kotuk know Mr. Trim no chase him. Besides, Kotuk's kayak very swift—see?"

"See here, Kotuk!" cried Trim, with a sudden ray of hope, "I reckon I do. Where is your kayak?"

"Down here," Kotuk answered, jerking his thumb toward the other side of the wharf.

"Is she already to go?"

"Yah."

"Got provisions on board?"

"Yah—heap."

"Will you take me for a passenger on a long cruise?"

"You no want sail, Mr. Trim. Cold, very cold—no fun—much danger."

"Nonsense, Kotuk. You know I don't care for cold or danger."

Trim had seized the Esquimau by the arm and was hurrying him along the wharf in the direction of the waiting kayak.

"Me like you go," Kotuk remarked.

"I'm going, anyway, whether you want me to or not," Trim responded. "Hustle in there. You haven't anything else to do, have you?"

"No. You hurry?"

"You bet, Kotuk. I never was in such a hurry in my life."

"Where you want go?"

"Straight out of the harbor and 'up to the north."

Trim was already in the kayak, and the Esquimau was in the act of casting off.

"Poor place—fish," he remarked.

"Never mind, Kotuk. There's game that I want up there that's worth all the fish in the harbor."

"All right."

Kotuk was evidently perfectly satisfied to take any course that his passenger desired. He had had experience enough with Trim to know that payment was sure and generous for anything that the young fellow wanted, and even a half-day's sail with him would profit Kotuk more than a week's successful smuggling or poaching.

The kayak was indeed a swift boat. It was fitted with a walrus-skin sail rigged like a catboat and supplied with oars and paddles to be used in case of failing wind.

As it set now the wind was favorable to great speed, and the little craft sped out of the harbor as gayly as if it were midsummer and the passenger were bound upon a pleasure trip.

Trim sat amidships with his back to Kotuk, who was at the tiller, in order that he might keep his eyes constantly forward for the first sign of Ole's sloop.

He was by no means certain that the kayak could make the headland north of Sitka soon enough to get a glimpse of the sloop.

If this failed, it was his intention to take Kotuk into his confidence and to depend upon the Esquimau's advice as to what course to pursue.

"Kotuk will know," he thought, "better than I what land Ole is likely to make for."

"There is one thing about it, the rascal can't go north without being constantly in United States waters, and if he lands he'll be on Uncle Sam's territory."

"The probability is that he is making for some little-used port, where he can get on a poacher or a smuggler or some kind of boat bound to a foreign port."

When they were out of the harbor, Trim pointed to the headland and told Kotuk to make for a point two or three

miles off the shore. This would enable the craft to get across Ole's course and so shorten the distance to some extent.

Blue spots upon the water to the north indicated the presence of islands, and there were other islands nearer at hand that prevented a clear view of the sea in that direction.

The wind held steady, and when at last they came to the open sea north of the headland, Trim had recourse to a small spyglass that he almost always carried with him. With this he searched the horizon without finding the slightest trace of Ole's sail.

"There is one thing about it," he reflected, "Ole won't venture to turn to the south very soon, for that would bring him within sight of Sitka, and he'll probably imagine that I would put after him in a steamboat."

"Quite likely he imagines I can make a steamboat off hand to pursue him in. The fact of his starting for the north would seem to indicate that he is bound to continue in that direction for a long time."

Reasoning thus, Trim directed Kotuk to head the kayak for the furthest of the blue islands. The Esquimau promptly complied, and for an hour or so the journey continued without a word being spoken by either of them.

Then Trim, who was beginning to feel the lack of sleep, due to his being up all the night before, decided that it would be best for him to take a nap.

"If we have to keep up this chase through the night," he said to himself, "I'd rather be at the tiller than have Kotuk there. I can trust his eyes in the daytime." So aloud he said:

"Kotuk, I'm after some one who went away from Sitka this morning in a sloop."

"I know," Kotuk answered, with a grin.

"You know?"

"Yah."

"What?"

"I know two Esquimaux—same me—go off this morning"

"Where did they go?"

Kotuk shook his head.

"Tell me if you know, Kotuk," urged Trim.

"Don't know," was the response.

"But you have an idea."

"Yah."

"Tell me about it."

"Me know not much. Very early—sun not up—white girl come to Kotuk's cabin. White girl want some boat—she hear of Kotuk's kayak—want to hire it—pay much money."

"I know who that girl was," said Trim when the Esquimau paused.

"Yah, very like."

"Well?"

"Kotuk want to make money, same other men. Kotuk show girl kayak—girl shake head—no good."

"Who, the girl?"

"No—girl all right. Much disappoint—she say kayak no good."

"The kayak is all right," said Trim. "What did she think was the matter with it?"

"She say too small."

"Oh, yes, I see!"

"You see?"

"Yes, Kotuk. She wanted a boat big enough for two passengers and for provisions for a long voyage, I reckon."

"Yah. She say something like that."

"Well, she went away then, did she?"

"She go find two friends—I tell her who they are—she give me dollar for telling—she take their boat."

"I ask them where they go—they say don't know—I ask again—they say don't know. So Kotuk think."

"Kotuk keep right on making kayak ready for sail—bimeby Kotuk say to friends—you thirsty?—friends say yah—Kotuk take them to saloon—Kotuk set 'em up—you see?"

"I think I do," Trim answered, with a laugh.

"Yah, Kotuk set 'em up twice. All same girl's dollar most gone—no matter. Kotuk ask bimeby where they going—they feel good—they say—North Cape."

"Whew!" whistled Trim, "that's a long way off. Two or three thousand miles, isn't it?"

"They mean headland—all same back there," he answered, jerking his thumb in the direction of the cliff where Trim had had his adventure.

"Oh, did they say where they would go after that?"

"They say they wait orders there—take man and girl—go north—where they know not—to put man and girl on land somewhere."

"Where do you think that will be, Kotuk?"

"Don't know."

"Of course not, but where do you think?"

"Me think Yedvik."

"How far away is Yedvik?"

"No know; say—wind same like this—six days."

Trim looked again toward the north; not a sign of Ole's sail anywhere.

"Kotuk," he said presently, "is there any other place but that one that they are likely to go to?"

The Esquimau shook his head.

"Harbor at Yedvik," he said. "Sometimes big boats stop there—nowhere else near here."

"That seems to settle it, then," thought Trim. "That's in line with my theory. They will make for Yedvik, where Ole will hope to get on to some passing whaler or poacher. It's a kind of a blind chase, but I'm going to try it."

"Kotuk," he asked, "is your kayak as swift as your friend's sloop?"

The Esquimau was a long time in answering, but he finally grinned and said:

"Think so."

"What are you smiling at?" asked Trim.

"Me think you take long journey."

"Yes, but I'll pay my passage."

"Yah! but very hard—very cold—storms perhaps."

"Ill risk all that."

"Then I laugh for good reason."

"Well, what is it?"

"If Ole come to Yedvik, he wait there for boat—perhaps kayak get there before other boat—then you catch Ole."

"Yes," retorted Trim, "and perhaps Ole will have the luck to find a boat at Yedvik just ready to start away."

The Esquimau nodded.

"Perhaps," he said, indifferently.

"Well, there's nothing to do but sail on now," continued Trim, "and I'm going to take a snooze. You keep your eyes open and let me know if you see anything."

The lad thereupon lay down in the bot-

tom of the boat, covered himself with a blanket, and in half a minute was sound asleep.

Some hours later, although it seemed but a minute, Kotuk reached over and shook him.

"Mr. Trim," he said, with a slight sign of eagerness.

"Well, what is it?" asked Trim, sitting up.

Kotuk pointed to the far horizon.

Trim looked, but could see nothing.

"Glass," said the Esquimau.

Trim promptly picked up his spyglass and looked again. By the aid of the glass he saw the upper part of a sail just above the horizon miles away.

"Is that Ole's sloop?" he asked.

"Think so," was the reply.

It was then nearly sundown, and from that time until dark Trim sat with his eye at the glass, viewing the distant sail.

When night came and he could no longer see he took Kotuk's place at the tiller, and the Esquimau, after having set out some of the provisions with which the boat was supplied, took his turn at sleeping.

All through the night Trim held the tiller, and steering by compass kept the craft pointed in the direction in which the sail had been seen.

In the morning it was found that the sail had disappeared, and the most patient search failed to give any trace of it.

Morning here does not mean exactly what the word usually does. It was the season when the days are short, and Trim was so far to the north that the time of actual sunlight each day was very brief.

Long before sunrise, however, the sea was light enough for him to observe objects upon it almost as clearly as if it were noon.

Kotuk had waked up long before sunrise and again had taken his place at the tiller.

The wind still held favorably for rapid progress, and so for many hours more they journeyed on, and the second day closed with no other sign of the fugitive sloop.

Trim and the Esquimau took turns in resting and steering the craft.

About the middle of the third day

Trim remarked a long line of blue on the northern horizon.

"That must be a pretty big island," he said.

Kotuk shook his head.

"Mainland," he responded.

"It can't be that Yedvik lies there."

"Not this side."

"What do you mean, then?"

"Kotuk has idee," the Esquimau remarked, gravely.

"Out with it," said Trim.

"That land," Kotuk then responded, "all same like arm, reach out into sea."

"It's a peninsula, is it?"

"Yah! long word; all same long land—reach out into sea—Yedvik on north side."

"Well, then, to get to Yedvik we've got to go around that point of land, haven't we?"

"Yah!"

"Then why don't we change our course?"

"Because Kotuk has idee that we get to Yedvik quicker by crossing land."

"Ah! that's a scheme. Give us more of your ideas."

"Well, on this side—straight ahead—I think small Esquimau village, called Deft."

"No big boats go to Deft. We land there—get sled and dogs—cross land to Yedvik—and if good luck we get there long before Ole."

"You're a good one!" cried Trim. "We'll try just that scheme, for the chances are that this good weather won't hold out much longer."

"No," Kotuk said, gravely; "wind turn to-day."

The wind did turn that day with a vengeance. They were yet many miles from Deft—too far away to distinguish the huts upon the shore—when the sea became very rough and the wind blew almost directly from the north.

Both men were drenched with cold spray, and it required all their exertions to keep their little craft upright.

The sail of course had to be taken in. Trim took the oars and worked at them with might and main, not only in order that the boat might make progress, but so that his blood should be kept in circu-

lation. It was the only possible way to keep warm.

Kotuk, more accustomed to this sort of experience, remained in the stern of the boat steering and working with the paddle.

Now and again as the waves rose higher bucketfuls of water came on board, and one or both men would have to stop for a moment to bail it out.

"It would only take a little larger wave than that," remarked Trim on one of these occasions, "to swamp us completely."

The Esquimau shook his head.

"Kayak no sink—you no fear."

"Oh, I'm not afraid!" Trim responded. "Cold as it is, I think I could swim from here to the mainland."

"Kayak all right," insisted Kotuk, who was paddling for all he was worth. "Air place both ends—float bottom up."

With a quick gesture he indicated the ends of the little boat, which were covered over with walrus skin, so closely sewed and glued that they made a water-tight compartment both at the prow and the stern.

It was perfectly evident from this that the kayak could not be made to sink unless those coverings of skin should be punctured.

If the boat was capsized, therefore, it would be possible for both men to cling to it, and unless they should freeze, survive until it should be cast up on shore.

As they forced the kayak slowly but steadily in the teeth of the wind the cliffs of the mainland prevented the storm from exercising its great violence upon them—that is, the wind was broken by the hills there, so that the further they went the less difficult became their task.

This does not mean that it became easy to push the kayak along.

On the contrary, the work still required all the muscle and nerve the men possessed.

The fact that they did not feel the force of the wind in their faces so much was a relief, but it made no apparent difference in the height of the waves.

As the boat slowly approached the shore and the water became shallower the waves became rougher.

There was still enough direct wind to

keep a cloud of spray in their faces almost all the time.

Trim could not see the foam from a line of breakers just ahead, although he could hear the crashing and booming of the surf distinctly.

"We mustn't get capsized by a roller, Kotuk," he called.

"We try, but no can tell," the Esquimau responded, desperately.

Seen through the flying spray, the real shore seemed far away, but the sound of surf was perilously near.

"Isn't there a broad beach here at low tide?" Trim demanded, trying in vain to peer ahead for signs of danger.

"Yah, very wide. Water long way from shore at low tide."

"Then if we get capsized in crossing the line of rollers we'll have a hard tussle of it."

The words were hardly out of Trim's mouth before the boat rose as if it had been lifted.

A huge wave was curling up to break. It tossed the kayak forward rapidly.

Both men held their paddles in the foaming water ready to work them in either direction according to need.

There was just an instant of hesitation while the kayak seemed to be suspended in air.

Then the wave slipped from under it with a deafening roar, tons of water leaped into the air in the form of spray, and the kayak dropped like a shot.

It struck directly in the middle upon a rock and broke in two.

The men were washed on, and for the moment they lost sight of each other.

Trim laid hold of the half of the kayak in which he was sitting.

The air-tight end served him as a life preserver.

Clinging to it, he was rushed along by the water until his feet touched bottom.

Then, dragging the wreck after him, he plowed through the receding wave until he was beyond the danger line.

Immediately after this he overtook Kotuk, who had saved himself in precisely the same way.

"Save ourselves and our food, too," remarked the Esquimau, with his mouth half full of salt water.

Fearful that another wave might over-

take and carry them back to sea, they waded on until they came to dry land.

The sun had been down a long time, but it was still very light.

Just before them were the huts of Deft.

All the inhabitants of that little village turned out to welcome them, and made things as pleasant for Trim as did the Esquimaux in one of his previous experiences at Vilnak.*

Trim was anxious to engage sled and dogs to continue the journey at once, but the Esquimaux advised strongly against it. They told him it would be folly to start while the wind was so high, and he was wise enough to follow their advice.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BATTLE WITH WOLVES.

"Plenty of time," said Kotuk, quietly. "Ole no go fast in this wind—when weather good we cross arm of land very quick—dogs beat sloop."

"I reckon you're right, Kotuk," Trim responded, philosophically accepting the situation, although he was not easily content to pass any time in idleness.

The Esquimaux entertained them with cheerful friendliness, but Trim noticed that there was not as generous a supply of food set forth as was the case when he passed a night among the people of this race at Vilnak.

The chief man of the settlement explained this to him during the evening.

"Bad winter," he said, gravely; "animals, birds, everything except Esquimaux, go away."

He shook his head solemnly, and it was plain that he was greatly troubled.

"Do you mean," asked Trim, "that the signs foretell worse weather than usual?"

"Much."

"That you have not been able to put in the usual winter provisions?"

"Yah."

"You can always catch fish, can't you?"

The Esquimaux shrugged his shoulders and waved his hands in the direction of the sea.

"Bimeby ice—ice everywhere—perhaps

find seal, walrus, or fish—perhaps not—Esquimaux watch hole in ice many days sometimes and catch nothing."

During the evening there was further talk of this sort to show that the Esquimaux were having hard times of every kind, and that they were alarmed lest they should die of starvation before the next spring.

Trim felt very sorry for them. He reflected sadly that while he would like to be generous and to pay them a great sum of money for the use of their dogs and for every other aid given to him, money could be of no service to these people.

There was no way in which they could spend it for their comfort during the approaching season, when they would be cut off from communication with the civilized world.

He took pains nevertheless to leave with them a large amount of money, so that if any accident should occur by which they could make use of it they would be able to do so.

The young fellow found that a night on shore was really needful to him; such sleep as he had gotten while in the kayak had not been regular or very restful. He slept, therefore, many hours, and found all the Esquimaux stirring when he at last awoke.

The storm had gone down. Kotuk, sure that Trim would wish to make a start as soon as possible, had a big team of dogs and a large sled ready for the journey. The start was made at once.

So far as the light was concerned it was still night, for the sun had not yet had time to rise upon this far northern land.

During the first part of the journey progress was not rapid, for the way lay along a winding trail that brought them at last to a summit of the hills that marked off that part of the coast.

The trail was not plain, but Kotuk had been over the ground once before and had no doubt of his ability to find the way.

He had only a vague idea of how many miles lay between them and Yedvik, but he was certain that this village was a little to the west of north, and with good luck they could arrive there by night.

"That's not saying much," remarked

* See "Trim's Race Across the Ice Fields," No. 2
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Trim, "for it strikes me that it's night most of the time up here."

"Yah," Kotuk answered, calmly. "But night means bedtime—hey?"

"Reckon it does."

The dogs were now speeding rapidly across comparatively level ground. The sky was clear, and the stars gave sufficient light to see the larger objects upon the landscape.

Some distance to the west there was a dark line that appeared to be the edge of a forest.

Nearer at hand were occasional stumps and trees, and all around were huge bowlders. To avoid these it was necessary to take a crooked course, and Kotuk willingly made use of Trim's compass in order to be certain that they did not get far from the proper line.

After they had been proceeding thus for two or three hours the stars faded out of sight and the atmosphere became as bright as day, but yet there was no sign of the sun.

In fact, it was not until nearly noon that the sun showed itself for a short time, lying very close to the horizon far to the south.

Not long after noon the sun disappeared again, and then for several hours there was light enough to read by if either of the travelers had cared to do so.

It was like a long, long evening in summer, except that the air was fearfully cold.

Both men of course were bundled heavily in furs, and when it was not necessary to look ahead sharply they had their faces covered completely with a cloth tippet.

"I wish I had a thermometer with me," Trim remarked on one occasion.

"Why?" asked Kotuk.

"I'd like to know how cold it is."

"Cold enough, isn't it?"

"Yes, thanks, but I'd like to tell my friends if I ever see them again just how cold it was during this trip."

"I guess," said Kotuk after a moment.

"Guess what?"

"Fifty degrees."

"Do you mean that you think that it is fifty degrees below zero?"

"Yah—'bout."

Trim noted how the breath of the dogs rushed in thick white clouds from their mouths and seemed to freeze instantly.

When they started the dogs were of a dark-brown color; now they were a glistening white from nose to tail. This was due to the moisture in their breath freezing as it fell upon their bodies.

"I reckon Kotuk's about right," Trim said to himself.

Gradually the darkness of night came on again, although it was not yet late in the afternoon.

Suddenly Kotuk gave a grunt of alarm and applied the lash viciously to the leading dogs. At the same time the dogs themselves strained harder at the harness and leaped forward with little yells that indicated unusual excitement.

"What's the matter?" asked Trim.

"You no hear?" returned Kotuk.

"I haven't heard anything but the tramping of the dogs and the slipping of the sled on the snow for hours."

"Ugh! Your ears no sharp."

"Perhaps not. But what is it?"

Kotuk again lashed the dogs and then turned his head and looked back.

"You pray?" he inquired, significantly.

"Certainly," answered Trim; "but if I was going to pray now I think it would be for a hot potato and a cup of coffee."

"No joke," said the Esquimau, solemnly. "Wolves!"

"Wolves, hey?"

"Yah! Listen!"

Ever since they had left the summit of the hills back of Deft they had seen no sign of life besides themselves and their dogs.

It was as the old man said—animals and birds had deserted that part of the country.

Trim listened, and several anxious seconds passed before he could distinguish anything beyond the noise made by the sled and dogs. Then he heard a faint note, as if some one a long way off was playing a horn.

"I hear it!" he said.

"Yah!" Kotuk responded. "Wolves."

He bent forward as he spoke, as if to make his body as small as possible, so that there would be less for the dogs to drag.

Trim pulled the tippet from his face

and freed his arms from the mass of furs which had been packed upon them.

"We'll make a fight for it, anyway," he remarked, coolly.

"Yah—you brave," answered Kotuk.

"But no hurry—wolves no catch us for a long time yet."

"Might as well be ready for them, though."

"Yah. They run very fast."

"How far away should you think Yedvik is now?"

"No can tell—one hour, maybe—maybe three."

"One hour is a long time," thought Trim.

Again he heard the distant baying of the wolves, and this time the sound was louder. It was no longer a faint musical note, but a distinct, harsh howl.

"They're out for business, and no mistake," Trim said to himself.

It was now as dark as midnight, and when he turned to look back over the long stretch of whitened plain that they were crossing he could not distinguish any moving object. Nevertheless, it was clear enough that the wolves were gaining upon them, for the sound of their howling came steadily nearer and nearer.

There was no telling but that they might spring from the darkness at any moment.

Trim had his revolvers ready, and in order to make a better fight of it he turned his back to the dogs and knelt upon the sled so as to get a good shot at the first comers.

The dogs needed no cracking of the whip to make them exert all their strength and swiftness. They knew as well as Kotuk did what that dismal howling meant.

They felt that once the wolves should overtake them there would be short work of turning the entire party, men and dogs, into a heap of bones.

Never in his life had Trim found the minutes so long or so fearfully weighted with anxiety. If only it had been daylight, so that he could see the pursuers!

He strained his eyes persistently, but caught no sight of the savage beasts, whose howls became louder and louder.

It was evident that a big pack was in pursuit.

"They'll be worse than human beings," he thought, "for the reason that every one of them will have to be killed off before we're safe. If it was a crowd of savage men, now, there would be some chance of scaring them by dropping one or two of their number."

"The probability is that these beasts won't take any fear from pistol shots, and will pursue as long as any one of them has life in him."

In this Trim was reckoning without complete knowledge of wolves.

He was right in the sense that nothing will stay a hungry wolf from attempting to get food, but he did not know that the wolf is not so particular as to what kind of food he eats.

Presently, after they had been following this fearful race for probably a half hour, Trim thought he could distinguish vaguely some wavering objects.

He feared at first that this might be due to the motion of the sled, which would make him mistake rocks or hummocks for wolves.

He had plenty of ammunition, but yet he was determined not to waste a single shot, for if it came to a close encounter all his chances might be lost in the time it would take him to load his weapon; so he raised his arm and waited a minute until in the gleam he could be certain that those waving objects were animals and not lifeless things—then he fired.

A fierce snarl, almost like the shriek of a human being, told him that his shot had taken effect. This sound was followed instantly by a chorus of howls that added new terror to the dogs and the Esquimaux driver. Kotuk gave vent to a grunt.

"There must be hundreds of them," he muttered.

Trim kept his eyes upon the ground at the back. He could see absolutely nothing except a few rods of level snow. There were no longer any waving objects.

"Is it possible," he thought, "that they have been scared and brought to a halt by one shot?"

For just an instant it seemed as if this was the case. Then the long baying be-

gan again, and again the noise grew nearer.

Later there was another sight of waving objects, toward which Trim directed a second shot. This was followed, as before, by wilder howls and a momentary disappearance of the enemy.

"If we can keep this sort of thing up," Trim said to himself, "we shall beat the demons, provided only that Yedvik is somewhere within reach."

The young fellow emptied one of his revolvers in this way, firing at intervals, and each time apparently checking the rush of the pursuing pack.

As he paused to reload his weapon, an operation that took but a second, he saw the real meaning of the situation.

The wolves were coming steadily nearer in spite of every skilful shot. Now he could see their leaping forms distinctly.

He picked the two leaders in the pack and fired twice in rapid succession. Both wolves aimed at jumped into the air and rolled over upon their backs instantly. The others just behind them sprung upon the fallen wolves and tore the flesh from their bones savagely. That explained it.

Every wolf that Trim had killed had become food for those nearest it, and this had accounted for the slight pauses in the pursuit.

The trouble was that the pack was so numerous that only a few could get any advantage from their fallen comrades, and those who stopped for a mouthful and failed to get one immediately rushed on again after the flying sled and dogs.

Seeing that this was the fiendish character of the wolves, Trim fired right and left, with a view of killing as many as possible at one volley, so as to delay the whole pack. This had the desired effect, but it by no means stopped the pursuit. It simply gave him time to reload his weapons before there was a fresh assault.

Each time the wolves dashed on they gained a little on the sled, until at last they were distinctly visible, and Trim had to keep up a rapid firing in order to stay their progress at all.

Kotuk dropped the reins and whip and busied himself in loading Trim's weapons.

Even at that the fierce beasts gained

upon them, and one fellow, whom Trim in his rapid firing had overlooked, got so far that he actually tried to leap upon the sled.

Trim's revolver at that instant was empty, and there was not even time to reach for the weapon that Kotuk had loaded. He therefore let go the butt, caught the revolver by its hot muzzle, and brought the handle down with all his force upon the wolf's forehead.

The beast dropped without a sound and landed upon the after part of the sled, where his dead body lay until Trim reached back and pushed it off to serve as prey for his companions.

It was beginning to look as if, in spite of successful shooting, the savage pack would overcome the travelers, when Kotuk gave a sudden exclamation, whether of alarm or relief Trim could not make out, dropped the revolver he was loading, and turned his attention again to the dogs.

They were on a down grade now, and the sled was going at terrific speed. It was gaining, too, and was catching the heels of the dogs nearest to it and tripping them up.

Kotuk made a vain effort to guide the dogs to one side in order that they might not be overcome by the rushing sled.

Trim saw what the situation meant. The sled would gain in speed as long as the down grade continued, would either upset the dogs or pass them and drag them after it, and at the end, wherever that might be, all would be in a heap and at the mercy of their savage pursuers.

It occurred to him that it might be possible to cut the harness and let the sled go. In this way the dogs would be sacrificed to the wolves, who might be satisfied then and give the men a chance to escape on foot.

It was necessary for himself to keep on firing at the pack.

"Cut the harness, Kotuk!" he called. But Kotuk clung to the sled and made no effort to obey.

A second later Trim observed that the wolves were unable to keep pace with the sled, which had already slewed past half the team of dogs.

It was going so fast and with such a jolting motion that he could not remain upon his knees. There was nothing for

it, therefore, but that he should crouch upon the bottom of the sled and take his chances just as Kotuk was doing.

Down they went, faster than any toboggan ever known, through the darkness, bounding over hummocks, dragging the yelping and whining dogs after them, both men nearly shaken from their places, until, with a jolt that seemed to make every bone in his body start from its fastenings, Trim felt the speed suddenly decrease.

They were shooting up a steep rise, and before the sled had half lost its headway it came to a stop by colliding against something.

Trim and Kotuk were hurled up against this object and the dogs came piling after them.

It was indeed just the hopeless heap that Trim had foreseen, and how he should fight the wolves now was a question that in the confusion he could not decide.

As he struggled to get to his feet and free himself from the writhing dogs he became conscious of two things—first, that the wolves were not behind, and, second, that there were loud cries from human beings followed instantly by the shots of rifles.

Then as Trim and Kotuk stood up, ready to make a last desperate effort to save their lives, they saw by the dim starlight that they had arrived at Yedvik.

The sled had run full tilt into the largest hut in the village, and the entire male population had turned out to fight off the oncoming pack of wolves.

The Esquimaux living there had heard the baying of the pack, as well as Trim's repeated shots, and were therefore ready with all the weapons they commanded not only to defend the travelers, but themselves.

Trim's work with his revolvers had been so effective that the Esquimaux had little to do, especially as the wolves at last took fright in the presence of so many enemies.

It proved that Trim's dogs were not seriously injured, and though the sled was smashed, that was of small consequence; another could be procured when needed, and the main thing was that no lives had been lost.

As soon as the excitement of the battle had died away Trim made inquiries that satisfied him that Ole had not yet turned up at Yedvik, and that no vessel had stopped there for weeks.

He cautioned Kotuk not to say much about the object of their journey.

"Let them know," he said, "that you expect a boat to arrive, so that they may be on the lookout for it. Until then I'm going to try to take things easy and find out what fun there is in living in the arctic zone."

Accordingly Trim slept that night as peacefully as if he were in a city hotel with nothing to do but enjoy himself.

On the following day the sun did not rise.

Trim was now in the land of long midnight.

CHAPTER V.

KOTUK'S DANGER.

At Yedvik, as at Deft, the Esquimaux told serious tales of hard times.

The early winter weather had never been so severe, game never so scarce.

"We're better off than some others," said one of the Esquimaux, "because here big boat sometimes land and give up provisions for the skins; but no boat's been here long time—perhaps no boat come all winter, and hunters go out for a week and find nothing to kill."

During the day after Trim's arrival most of the men in Yedvik were taking advantage of the good weather to fish, for there was no telling when the water thereabout would be choked with ice.

Trim fished with them, and thus did his share in procuring their food supply.

There was no sign of a boat on that day or on the next; but on the third, just about noon, when, although no sun was in sight, there was light enough to see for miles away, a sail was observed in the northwest.

Kotuk stood by Trim when this was observed.

"May not be Ole," he remarked. "Let me take glass. I tell."

Trim handed the glass to Kotuk, who looked through it long and earnestly.

"Yah!" he said at length, "that my friend sloop."

Trim smiled as he thought of the surprise in store for Ole.

"I don't suppose he'll enjoy it very much," the young fellow thought, "but he ought to find some satisfaction in seeing a familiar face immediately after landing.

"I'll keep out of sight until he's on shore."

So Trim went to one of the huts and sat within watching the approaching sloop from the doorway.

It came nearer and nearer and at last the hull could be seen distinctly.

About that time the little vessel came about as if the crew were preparing to cast anchor, and Trim was rejoicing over the prospect of soon meeting the big Swede again.

He was even planning how he should make the capture complete without a struggle, for he had no doubt that Ole would resist and do his best to kill his determined pursuer.

"He'll be so paralyzed with astonishment," thought Trim, "that I ought not to have any difficulty to bring him to terms."

The lad thought he knew exactly how to accomplish this, when the sloop, instead of coming to anchor, put about and sailed away to the north.

"What's up now, Kotuk?" Trim cried.

The Esquimaux was standing a little way from the hut looking at the departing sloop.

"Don't know," he answered in a disappointed tone. "Don't come here—that's all."

"I should think that's enough," Trim retorted. "What's the matter with them, anyway?"

"No can tell—Ole no come Yedvik—that's all."

"It's not possible, is it, that he's going to clear out of here altogether? Is he trying to find a better anchorage?"

"No, he could anchor there—water so deep he could come very close shore—no, go somewhere else—that's all."

Trim looked with bitter wrath at the disappearing sloop. There was no question that it was not going to stop at Yedvik—it was going as fast from the village as possible, and the sea in the direction toward which it pointed was open.

There seemed to be no land whatever in that direction.

All the Esquimaux in Yedvik were disappointed at the failure of the sloop to stop there.

"No other boat perhaps all winter," they said.

"You wouldn't have got any good out of that boat," Trim told them.

"Where do you think she's going?"

It seemed to him as if he had come so far north that there could be no other place where human beings could live, but the Esquimaux told him of several small settlements still further up the coast.

Bearing in mind that Ole's one chance of successful flight was in getting aboard a south-bound vessel, Trim asked if there was any port to the north where such a vessel might stop.

Yes, they told him, there was a port—Zeglit by name. It was a long distance away and there was less chance that a vessel would put in there than at Yedvik. Still, it did happen sometimes, and it looked as if Zeglit was the place to go if there was still any hope of catching the Swede.

Trim was more determined than ever to do this, but the question of how to continue the pursuit was more difficult than before.

There was no boat at Yedvik which was suitable for making the long journey to Zeglit. The way by land would be round about and extremely dangerous.

Kotuk had never been over the ground, and although he was willing to go anywhere with Trim, he could not speak hopefully of the chance of making the journey successfully.

Trim asked his new friends if any of them would act as a guide. They shook their heads—it was too much risk for them.

Trim had not the heart to urge them very hard, for these people had a severe struggle with life at the best and he had no wish to make things worse for them.

Finally the leading man of the settlement said:

"I tell you—we think long time go off—great hunt—ten men go out—hunt for moose, bear, anything.

"You go with hunters, you and Kotuk—and you safe with them.

"They show you most of way to Zeglit, after that you go on to Zeglit alone or come back—just as you like."

"Thanks. Just the scheme!" cried Trim, highly delighted. "When will your party start out?"

"Oh, next week, perhaps."

"Whew! I can't wait all that time. Can't you start now?"

The Esquimaux did not know about it. They are not very quick thinkers and to them a few days more or less did not count.

Trim, however, now that he saw that they were willing to go out into the wilderness of snow, had no hesitation in urging them to hurry up about it; consequently after a day spent in preparation the party started.

There were a dozen of them, all told. Nearly all of the dogs in Yedvik, as well as those brought there by Trim, were harnessed to sleds, of which there were enough to enable all the men to ride.

There was to be no attempt at hunting in the neighborhood of Yedvik, for the Esquimaux knew only too well that game had deserted that locality.

For nearly twelve hours the party journeyed steadily, pausing only once about midday for rest and refreshments.

At night, as they themselves more correctly put it, at bedtime, for it was always night, they went into camp near the shore of a little lake.

There was no water in sight, of course, for ice and snow covered everything.

For the first time in his life Trim watched the process of building a snow house.

He had tried his own hand at that operation in earlier days, as every boy does who lives in a region where winter brings snow, but he realized speedily, as he said himself, that "the boys aren't in it with the northern men."

They proceeded as scientifically, if not as correctly, as house builders of the south. More than that, here the weather is so extremely cold that it is possible to find a kind of snow that packs like solid stone.

For fully fifteen minutes after the party halted the men went about prodding the snow here and there until they found exactly the kind they wanted.

Then while some built a fire and prepared supper the others cut the blocks of snow and stacked them up until a shelter had been made where the night could be passed in safety.

A quantity of whale blubber had been brought on the sleds, and some of this was set burning within the hut itself. It made the air stifling and almost unbearable to Trim, but without it every man in the party would have frozen before morning.

Dogs and all slept in the hut, and the next morning the journey was resumed.

The lad from the south could not get over a continual feeling of surprise at the endless night.

During about one hour in the day the stars paled, but there was never anything like the bright light of a southern day.

At the end of the second day Trim asked his friends how much longer it would take to get to Zeglit.

One of them responded, with an amused smile, that at this rate they might get there in a week.

"We shall leave you to-morrow," he added.

"Well," thought Trim, "I may get used to this everlasting night time, and I reckon if these Esquimaux can stand it I can; at the same time I shall give three cheers the next time I see the sun. I wonder if I ever shall?"

When the party crawled out of the second snow hut to begin the third day's journey the Esquimaux looked at the sky with alarm.

"Storm coming," they said.

"Is that going to prevent your getting on?" asked Trim, anxiously.

"No can tell," they answered. "We get better place than this if we have time."

They hurried their departure and cheered the dogs on to their greatest speed in order to reach what they said would be a safe place to remain in if they had to while the storm lasted.

The wind rose steadily all through the forenoon, and the stars disappeared behind banks of heavy clouds.

Early in the afternoon it began to snow. It came down so hard and fast that the dogs found difficulty in dragging the sleds.

At last the Esquimaux halted, convinced that they could not reach the place they wished to, and set about making preparations for some kind of a camp where they were.

It would have been better if they had stayed at their second camp.

It seemed as if after they decided to halt the wind blew in greater fury and the snow fell faster than ever.

It was impossible to see a man at a distance of a few feet.

Trim was working with the others, carrying blocks of snow from the place where they were cut to the spot where the shelter was being built.

The work was exceedingly difficult, for it was hard to see and a good deal harder to retain one's footing. Still the gale increased in fury.

Presently a fierce, heavy blast caught them, and one or two of the sleds were torn from their fastenings and sent out of sight before the wind; the dogs were dragged after them in spite of their efforts.

With cries of alarm several of the Esquimaux started out to catch the sleds and drag them back.

The leader of the party called out to them to beware, but they did not heed him. For fully two minutes that terrific blast of wind continued.

When it began Trim was carrying a block of snow to the unfinished hut and his back was to the wind. It threw him flat down upon his face. When he tried to get up he found it so difficult to rise that he concluded it to be the better thing to remain as he was until the wind should go down a bit.

Somebody fell beside him.

"Hello, Kotuk! is that you?" Trim asked.

"Yah!" answered his companion. "Heap big wind."

"I should think so. How long do you suppose it's going to last?"

"No can tell."

When at length the furious blast gave way they struggled to their feet.

The wind was still high, but they could move about without much difficulty.

The unfinished hut was before them and their own team of dogs was huddled

together, having somehow managed to escape the force that had sent the others sliding.

They could see no sign of the hunters or their dogs or their sleds.

At first this was not alarming, because the snow was falling so fast that the others might be within a rod or two and yet be invisible.

Kotuk called aloud to his companions. There was no response.

Trim fired one of his revolvers in the air. A few seconds later they heard a faint report in the direction toward which the wind was blowing.

"We must go to them," said Kotuk.

"They'll come back here, won't they?" asked Trim.

"No can tell. Maybe they can't, and anyhow we must be together. No safe for anybody if we all lost."

Trim could see himself that it was better for the party to keep together, and accordingly he helped Kotuk willingly in getting the sled and dogs ready to move on.

They went cautiously before the wind, frequently shouting and occasionally firing in order to warn their companions of their whereabouts.

After the first report that they had heard as an answer to Trim's shot, no sound came to them of the missing Esquimaux.

For an hour or two they toiled blindly on in the darkness, which was growing denser as the real night approached.

At last Kotuk brought the dogs to a halt.

"Lost!" he said, disconsolately.

"That's what we are," Trim responded. "And it's worse now than if we had stayed at the camp. Not only have we got away from the others, but we have nothing to shelter us."

Kotuk stood still a minute thinking the situation over.

"Must keep moving," he remarked at length, and on they went.

What with the falling snow and the growing darkness, it soon became impossible to see where they were stepping.

They knew only that they were in the snow. The dogs toiled along beside them, but it required both Trim and

Kotuk hauling at the sled to keep that with them.

"This does look as if it were all up with me," said Trim to himself, "but I would just like to know how Ole is getting along."

This thought had hardly occurred to him before Kotuk fell down. Trim reached out to help him and went down too. But that wasn't the worst of it—they kept on going down.

It was somewhat like the slide with which they landed in Yedvik, but they were not on the sled now.

It was with them and Trim grabbed it by the side with one hand while with the other he caught Kotuk by the shoulder; the dogs came tumbling along with them.

The snow was several inches deep, but the incline on which they started to slide was so steep that they plowed along down it as rapidly, apparently, as if it were uncovered ice.

Faster and faster they shot down. The dogs were yelping furiously and making frantic efforts to break away; the harness held them, however, so that they remained sliding down in a confused heap.

"There'll be trouble for anything that gets in our way," thought Trim with grim humor. "And it's lucky for us there are no hummocks here."

After what seemed to be miles of this kind of struggling their speed slackened, for they had come upon a level and presently they halted. Sliding along thus they had piled up snow in front of them, and they came to rest gently at last without so much as a bruise to tell of their strange experience.

Trim and Kotuk got up and for the next few minutes devoted their efforts to helping the dogs out of the tangle they had got into with their harness.

"What next, Kotuk?" asked Trim.

"Ugh!" he answered. "Make house."

This they did as well as they could. In the darkness it was impossible to find the best kind of snow, but some sort of shelter they did manage to erect, under which they drove the dogs and afterward crawled themselves.

In spite of the perils which surrounded them and the unknown dangers which might come, Trim slept like a top.

When he awoke the storm had ceased. The sky was clear, and by the light of the stars he saw that they were encamped upon a perfectly level plain.

The level was broken a short distance away by a steep hill down which they had slid the evening before.

Kotuk had not the slightest idea where they were, though he judged from the looks of things that this level plain upon which they were encamped was a frozen lake or arm of the sea.

The poor fellow, accustomed though he was to the dangers of a northern winter, was bewildered by the situation and knew not what to advise.

"It strikes me," said Trim, "that the first thing we had better do is to hunt for fresh meat."

"We're in luck that some of our provisions managed to stick to the sled. We've got enough here to last three days, anyhow. Meantime——"

"No game here," interrupted Kotuk, gloomily.

"I don't know about that," Trim answered. "I'm going to see what can be found."

Kotuk, utterly discouraged, refused to leave the camp.

Trim therefore gave him a revolver to use for signaling if there should be occasion for it and started on alone in the direction away from the hill.

There seemed to be no end of the plain in that direction.

Toward midday it grew lighter, as usual. Trim could distinguish the heap of snow which he and Kotuk had made for a shelter at a great distance.

He occasionally looked in that direction while he was tramping over the ice field.

Hunger at last compelled Trim to turn back; he had found no game nor any sign of any.

As he was approaching the shelter, although yet at a considerable distance, he saw two moving figures there.

One of them he supposed was Kotuk. He could not make out at first who or what the other was, for the figure was evidently larger than any of the dogs.

Then a shot from Kotuk's revolver caused him to hurry his steps, and a moment later he saw a sight that made his heart stand still with horror.

A huge polar bear had come up to the hut and surprised the Esquimau. The latter, frightened out of his senses, had fired wildly, and missed the bear.

The great animal, as hungry doubtless as were the wolves that had pursued the travelers, leaped for Kotuk, caught him in his forearms, and as Trim drew near was bracing himself against the snow shelter, while he was trying to crush the life out of the Esquimau's struggling body.

Bear and man were in such a position that Trim, good marksman though he was, dared not fire for fear of killing Kotuk.

The Esquimau was making a furious struggle for life, and the chances were that he would wriggle himself into the bullet's way if Trim should fire. The lad therefore, without a thought of peril to himself, rushed forward with a vain idea that he would tear Kotuk from the bear's grip.

The animal roared savagely as Trim came up, and catching at the snow shelter with one forearm, while he held Kotuk with the other, he raised one of his hind feet and struck Trim full in the chest with it and tumbled him heels over head and hurled him rods away.

Trim picked himself up with the agility of a cat and rushed again to the attack.

The bear had slipped in the effort and had half fallen, still holding Kotuk in his arm.

In this position he presented a target at which Trim could fire with safety. The lad did so, and with a terrifying howl the bear dropped the Esquimau, staggered back against the snow shelter and rolled over.

He was by no means dead as a result of this shot, but Trim easily finished him with another; then he turned to Kotuk.

The Esquimau lay in the snow panting loudly.

"How is it, Kotuk?" Trim asked, leaning over him. "Any bones broken?"

"No can tell," was the Esquimau's characteristic answer.

Trim helped him to his feet and the Esquimau felt along his ribs and legs, and finally shrugged his shoulders, saying:

"Kotuk heap all right, but close squeeze."

"It was a close squeeze and no mistake," Trim responded.

Kotuk nodded and walked up to the dying bear. After looking at the animal for a moment he gave him a little kick, turned aside and said with a grin:

"Plenty to eat now."

CHAPTER VI.

A VOYAGE ON AN ICEBERG.

It was well enough to talk about having plenty of meat to eat, but it was another matter to cook it.

Trim was not yet prepared to eat raw bear's meat, and beyond a little blubber they had nothing with which to make a fire, unless they should burn up their sled.

There was not woodwork enough on the sled to more than cook a single steak, so that it would have been folly to sacrifice that, even if it were not probable that they would need the sled later.

The problem, therefore, that Trim had to solve now was how to get wood. He looked back at the hill down which he had slid the night before, and so far as he could see in the half darkness it was entirely bare of trees.

"The probability is," he said to himself, "that that is not an ordinary hill, anyway, but a glacier, and this is a part of it we are camping on."

"Quite likely this is the sea itself, and now if we should travel far enough we might come to the edge or some kind of shore where there would be a possibility of getting driftwood. Anything is better than staying here."

Kotuk agreed to this.

The Esquimau was greatly encouraged by having a supply of food at hand.

Accordingly he prepared willingly to break camp and move elsewhere.

They hitched the dogs to the bear's carcass and prepared themselves to drag the sled.

The bear was so heavy that the dogs found some difficulty in dragging it, but they got along nevertheless as fast as the men could conveniently walk.

Trim took a course due south, on the

principle that the sea would be more likely to lie in that direction than in any other.

They tramped mile after mile without coming to anything whatever that broke the level of the ice field.

They were getting so hungry that they would have had to stop soon, when they discovered a fallen tree lying directly across their path.

Its roots were partly in the air and partly buried in the ice.

"That tells the story," Trim said. "This is a glacier. And this tree was caught by it somewhere far inland and so brought down toward the sea."

Of course a fire was made in short order and a supper of bear's meat was prepared for both men and dogs. While Kotuk attended to this Trim did his best in the making of a shelter. He had learned his lessons well, and so succeeded with occasional help from the Esquimaux in making a hut that would hold them all.

They slept there that night. The next morning they found that their heavy coats were uncomfortable when they were moving about.

While they were preparing breakfast they heard loud reports and strange grinding noises. The Esquimaux paid little attention to them, although it was clear enough that he regarded them seriously.

"Is the ice in motion?" asked Trim.

"Yah," returned Kotuk. "Heap move."

He shook his head as if unwilling to guess what might happen. After they had breakfasted Kotuk suggested that he would go on an exploration.

"You do all work," he said; "you heap tired—you sleep. Kotuk take his turn—find sea somewhere—then maybe we make boat or something."

It was not at all clear to Trim's mind what could be done if he should find the sea, but he did think it worth while to keep on exploring in the hope of coming some day to some kind of a settlement, and as indeed he was thoroughly tired out, he agreed to Kotuk's suggestion and crawled into the hut.

Kotuk announced that he would return by noon.

"If we no find better place," he said, encouragingly, "we stay by this tree until we burn it all up."

He started on with a couple of the dogs as companions, leaving the others fastened by a long thong to the sled. This gave the dogs that remained plenty of room to exercise, and if they chose they could crawl into the hut without being unfastened.

Trim lay down upon the blanket in the hut and was almost instantly asleep.

It was not yet midday when a man came toiling across the ice field toward the hut.

There were no dogs with him, and any one could have seen that he was not an Esquimaux. He was as large as two ordinary Esquimaux.

He walked very slowly, as if his strength was almost gone.

When he arrived near the hut he halted an instant and looked around as if fearful of something. At that moment the dogs were all within the entrance to the hut.

The stranger stepped to the sled and took up an article that was lying there. It was a haversack partly filled with matches, cartridge boxes, and other small things that Trim managed to carry with him.

The stranger slowly raised the flap of the haversack and started violently at what he saw there. It was simply a name, Trimble C. Carter, stamped upon the cover.

The stranger laid the haversack down and approached the snow hut. All such huts as this are so constructed that there is a small hole in the top to serve as a chimney when blubber is burned inside. The weather being warm, there was none burning there now.

The stranger was so tall that he could lean over upon the hut and look down through this hole. He did so, and just then the dogs, becoming aware of his approach, set up a terrific yelping.

Trim opened his eyes just in time to see the face of Ole Hansen disappear from the hole above his head.

The lad jumped from where he was lying and made for the low door. He had to go on his hands and knees and drive the dogs out ahead of him in order to get through.

When he emerged he saw Ole, with a fierce smile upon his face, approaching him with an open knife in his hand.

"You go everywhere," cried the Swede, "but I finish you at last."

Trim did not wait for the attack. He leaped forward, threw up one hand to catch the Swede's descending arm, and thus warded off the blow.

With the other hand he struck the Swede squarely in the chest.

Once before these two had struggled, and then the Swede was more than a match for Trim. With his giant frame it would seem as if he could take the lad in his hands and break his back as he would a stick.

Nevertheless Trim's blow sent the tall fellow staggering back until he fell full length upon the snow.

He did not try to get up, and when Trim stood over him with his revolver ready to fire there was no occasion for any anxiety as to what Ole might do.

His knife had dropped from his hand and he lay back perfectly helpless.

"Give up!" he said, feebly. "I give up. Yust starved. Give me food and I no harm you. If you won't give me food shoot me."

It needed but a glance at the giant Swede's sunken cheeks and bloodshot eyes to show that he was indeed suffering from starvation. There was no more fight in him.

His fierce enmity to Trim had given him the nerve to make an effort at revenge, and when he found that the young fellow's blow was enough to tumble him over his courage left him.

Trim saw that he was harmless, and without stopping to ask questions or even to search him for weapons that might be concealed upon him, the lad hastened to the sled and brought the Swede a piece of bear's meat, which Ole devoured greedily.

"Ah!" he said between his mouthfuls, "t'ere is no escaping you. I had rather be your prisoner t'an starve to deat'."

"How did you get here?" asked Trim.

Ole shook his head doubtfully.

"How can I tell?" he answered. "My boat wrecked—my Esquimaux drowned—I t'rown on shore—I walk—don't know how many days, for I don't see t'e sun."

"How far away is the sea?"

"Ten mile, perhaps."

"Is your boat lying on shore?"

"What t'ere is left of it."

"Do you suppose we could repair it?"

"No."

"Well," said Trim, "we can at least move to the south, and that ought to bring us somewhere if we keep moving long enough."

"Yah!" responded Ole. "We walk south if we no freeze here, and if we go far enough we melt."

There was no humor in the Swede's tone. He spoke in a melancholy way, as if he had no courage or hope of any kind left, but he kept on devouring bear's meat greedily.

"You didn't need to come so far north for this meeting," said Trim after a moment.

"No," Ole responded, "I know t'at."

"You know it?"

"Yah."

"How so?"

"Me know you wait for me at Yedvik."

"You knew that?"

"Yah."

"How did it happen? I thought I had kept myself out of sight as your boat came into Yedvik harbor."

"Oh, yah! You no give 'way anyt'ing. It was t'is way."

The Swede laid down his food and spoke with considerable rapidity.

"I t'ink you great man," he said. "I t'ink you do anyt'ing."

"Sometimes I say I beat you—but I no believe it—I feel all my inside t'at you get best of me some day."

"My one hope was t'at Jennie, t'e girl in Sitka, my sweetheart, you know, would outwit you."

"I t'ink she did a little."

"Yes," Trim assented, "she got you away from Dan's dive right enough, but she didn't play her next trick quite so well."

"No, t'at's right—she slip up somehow—she tried to make you believe I go off to t'e hut sout' of Sitka—hey?"

"That's what she did."

"Yah! I told her I no much t'ink you would tumble to t'at."

"Well, when I see Jennie coming up t'e cliff t'ere, nort' of Sitka, and t'e carriage running along t'e roat fast, I knowed well 'nough t'at you must be in t'e carriage, so as you know I climb down t'e cliff fast—get in my boat yust in time to catch t'e revolver t'at Jennie t'rowed to me—t'en I sail away.

"And when I t'ink how no good boats left in Sitka, I feel for a few minutes t'at I am safe.

"I t'ink go to Yedvik—get on whaler t'ere.

"So I tell my Esquimaux to sail for Yedvik.

"T'ey no like it—but I talk money and I show my revolver—so t'ey sail away.

"Well, two or t'ree days pass.

"I look all t'e time to t'e sout', wondering if steamer come chasing me.

"Bimeby, in middle of day, I climb up t'e rope ladder of t'e mast and look wit' glass far, far sout'.

"I see kayak.

"No can tell who in it, but sight of kayak 'nough.

"I know you follow me, so t'en we go on until we come near Yedvik.

"All t'e time we go into Yedvik harbor I t'ink how perhaps you land somewhere on sout' side of peninsula, and cross wit' dogs and watch shore wit' glass.

"No see you, but I do see Esquimau who I t'ink wit' you.

"I give glass to one of my men, who look and say 'T'at Kotuk,' your man—hey?"

"Yes," said Trim, "Kotuk was my companion."

"T'at settled it—we know if Kotuk in Yedvik you in Yedvik—so we sail away—see?

"We make for Zeglit—no good weather—and my Esquimaux make much trouble—but I show my revolver and t'ey have to sail.

"T'e trouble is I have to sleep some time—so—once when I sleep t'ey steal my revolver and t'row it overboard.

"T'en I know not what to do.

"T'e Esquimaux would turn sout', but t'ey have not much food left on boat and so must go to some port.

"Zeglit nearest.

"T'ey make up t'eir minds to find Zeglit, and so we keep on to t'e nort'.

"I know not how long it last—always dark.

"Large snow—high waves—terrible cold."

The Swede shook his head and shivered at the memory of the fearful perils he had undergone.

"At last one night, or day, or what I say noontime, mebbe—always so dark—t'e boat smash against somet'ing.

"We all t'rown out—a wave carry our boat and all high up on land or ice—don't know which—and it don't matter.

"Bot' t'e Esquimaux swept back into sea and drown.

"I cling to boat wreck and so saved.

"One little can of meat left—I take it, and for a long time wander along t'e shore—finally meat all gone.

"I 'fraid of sea—rat'er go inland t'an be near t'at dark noisy sea any more—so I walk and walk and come here—t'at's all."

Just as Ole finished his story Kotuk came back.

His face was expressive of alarm, and he merely glanced at the Swede as he said:

"I find sea and almost drown—no can tell what happen to us."

"What is the matter, Kotuk?" Trim asked.

"We on iceberg," the Esquimau replied.

"I go near edge—it goes smash—smash—break in big pieces, and I almost get carried away—dogs did."

"You lost a couple of dogs, then?"

"Yah. T'ey go sailing off on small iceberg.

"We go bimeby."

"Well, that will be better than staying here," said Trim, grimly.

All this time the air was filled with the creaking, groaning and booming noises that showed that the immense ice field was on the move and breaking up into what would be icebergs if the pieces should float out into the open water.

Even as they stood there wondering what they had better do there came a noise like the roar of a hundred cannon, not far behind them.

Turning about quickly, they saw that a tremendous crack had occurred in the

ice but a few rods from where they were.

Trim ran out toward the crack.

"Look out!" Kotuk called, warningly.

Trim halted and presently ran back again to the camp.

The ice was cracking in every direction, and in some places the openings were too wide to jump across.

The dogs yelped and howled dismally. They seemed to feel as if the world were coming to an end.

Kotuk tried to quiet the dogs in vain. They sat on their haunches and howled, and neither commands nor cuffs could make them cease.

"Don't like t'is," remarked the Swede, gloomily.

"Well, I don't know," returned Trim.

"It seems to me that it's rather interesting."

His companions looked at him in astonishment. They could not understand how it was that he should take the matter so coolly. In fact, Trim was mentally prepared for the worst, but he had been through so many perils upon this expedition that he now felt a quiet confidence that somehow he would get out of it all right.

"I may die next minute," he said to himself, "though I don't quite see how I can, but if I should I must say it will be an interesting death."

The roaring and booming of the moving ice field continued, and for a moment the men found it difficult to stand. The whole mass was shaking and vibrating; then it suddenly became motionless, although the booming noises continued from a distance.

Looking back to the place where the first crack had appeared, Trim saw that now it was very wide, and on examination later he could distinguish water between the great cake of ice upon which they stood and the ice beyond.

"We're afloat," he remarked, quietly.

The three men watched the ice field from which they were slowly drawing away in silence for a moment.

Although it was midday, it was yet too dark to see it clearly, and presently they could not distinguish it at all.

In the other direction the ice field upon which they stood stretched away so far that they could not see its edge.

"Well," said Ole after a time, "I your prisoner—you take me back to Sitka—hey?"

"I shall if this craft can be made to go there," Trim answered.

"You do any'ting," returned the Swede; "you say Sitka to ice, and to Sitka it will go."

"I wish that was so," Trim answered.

"I t'ink so, and I go to sleep."

With this Ole crawled into the hut and did not come out again until the middle of the next day. Trim did not rest at all that night. As the hours wore on the cracking and booming of the ice fields gradually diminished.

He supposed this was due to the fact that the iceberg upon which they floated was getting further and further from the land, and in the morning this was proved to be the case.

When it was light enough for them to see objects at any distance, it was discovered that there was open water near them, stretching away further than the eye could reach.

In the other direction the ice field seemed to be unbroken.

"T'is is an immense iceberg," remarked Ole to Kotuk, who had sat by the fire most of the night without stirring.

"Yah," Kotuk responded, "but not stay so long."

"You mean t'at it will break up into smaller pieces?"

"Yah, him break where you stand any minute."

"Well, if it breaks it breaks," said Trim. "We can't help that."

Inspired by the lad's nerve, the Esquimau prepared a meal of bear's meat, and from that time on did the work of cooking for the camp without waiting to be asked.

He was silent most of the time, but even he seemed to gain confidence from Trim.

Ole spent most of the time in the snow hut. He came out to eat, and at midday he would stand looking all around as long as the light lasted, as if hoping to see some promise of rescue.

Several days passed thus.

As the Esquimau foretold, the iceberg broke into smaller fragments, but no

crack occurred near enough to the camp to endanger the travelers.

When there was a break it was accompanied by a chorus of terrific howls from the dogs.

How far or how fast they were traveling, or even in what direction, it was impossible to say; but one day, when Kotuk and Ole were at the moment in the hut, they heard Trim uttering a wild hurrah.

They crawled out hastily to see what was the matter.

"Look!" shouted the lad, pointing to the south.

On the very edge of the horizon they saw the rim of the sun.

"We're going south," cried Trim, "and to-morrow we may have half an hour of real sunlight." And so it proved.

Each day after that grew a little longer, and with every day they saw land to the east.

Neither Kotuk nor Ole was familiar enough with the coast to make out where they were.

The weather was not always pleasant, but with their shelter they suffered no very great discomfort, and the bear's meat held out so well that they had plenty to eat.

On the day when the sun rose at eleven, Kotuk pointed to a cliff lying almost to the south of them and remarked:

"Know that place?"

"Where is it?"

"Near Vilnak."

"Ah! if we could only land there."

It looked indeed as if they might do so. The iceberg floated steadily in that direction until it was nearly time for the sun to set again. The land was then very plain, and Trim thought that he could distinguish the Esquimau huts upon the shore.

This was encouraging, but about the same time he noticed that the berg was changing its direction and veering off to the west.

"Stir up the fire!" he called. "Burn up the whole tree if necessary!"

Kotuk and Ole, perceiving that Trim was anxious to make a signal, immediately built up a rousing fire, while Trim shot his revolver into the air several times.

Just as the sun sunk out of view he saw

three kayaks start out from shore and come toward them.

A half hour later three of the Vilnak people climbed onto the iceberg.

Their astonishment at finding Trim there was too great for words.

Little time, however, was spent in explanations. The three travelers with their dogs were loaded into the kayaks and taken to Vilnak. There they remained for a day or two, until the weather, which had grown stormy, permitted of the sending of a messenger across the straits to the island of Taska.

There the messenger found white men who were friends of Trim. They were men whom Trim had served in one of his previous investigations, and they promptly sent a schooner across to Vilnak.

On this boat Trim returned to Sitka with Kotuk and Ole.

The Swede made no attempt to escape, and in due time he became the companion of his master in the barracks jail.

It proved that he had more anxiety for escaping Trim than the lad had supposed.

He had killed his man somewhere in the course of his adventures, and was in mortal terror lest Trim should discover this fact and hand him over to the Swedish authorities.

As that crime had taken place not on American soil, Ole was punished simply for his connection with the robbery which he and the impostor De Bilk you had planned.

This was Trim's last experience among the Alaskans, but it was by no means his last in detective work among strange people.

It was not long after his departure from Sitka that circumstances brought him into connection with a case that led to a journey to Australia, where by his cleverness he unearthed a great crime and rediscovered a lost gold mine.

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